

# Department of Human Services

Prepared by the  
DHS Office of  
Communications  
(517) 373-7394



## Articles in Today's Clips Wednesday, May 30, 2007

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	2-4
Foster Care	5-8
Child Care	9
Early Childhood Development	10
Juvenile Justice	11
Domestic Violence	12
Vulnerable Adults	13
Food Assistance	14
Unemployment	15
State Budget	16-18

\*Important story at this spot



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published May 30, 2007

## Schneider: Reader horrified to see 3 kids alone in car

The subject of Jenny Spurbeck's e-mail to me was "I witnessed a crime on Monday." But in fact she hadn't.

A shame? Yes. A travesty of parenting? Certainly. But in this particular state, at this moment, what Spurbeck witnessed in the parking lot of the Eastwood Towne Center Wal-Mart was not a crime.

### LSJ BLOGS

Concealed weapons

As a 7-Eleven employee, Erica Saldivar noticed a "scary" connection:

The customers buying liquor were invariably the ones who asked for the free empty cups kept behind the counter.

Check out my blog at [www.lsj.com/schneiderblog](http://www.lsj.com/schneiderblog).

That could soon change - but first Spurbeck's description of what she saw:

"When I parked," Spurbeck wrote, "I noticed that the van next to me had the front windows open and there were kids in the back seat. The three I saw looked to be about 2, 3 and 5.

"They were obviously petrified, and had been left in the car alone. After shopping for about 30 minutes I returned to my car and the kids were still alone. The little ones were crying and the 5-year-old was trying to get them to be quiet. They were dripping with sweat; they were miserable, and they were scared."

Spurbeck returned to the store and notified a clerk of the situation. The clerk called a customer-service manager, who checked on the kids, then told them she would bring them bottles of water.

### Unwise practice

Right about then the driver of the van - an older woman with another child in tow - showed up. The store manager, while trying to be diplomatic, reminded the woman that leaving young children unattended in a car for an hour was not a wise thing to do - especially not in a parking lot on a sun-baked afternoon.

Spurbeck wrote: "Please publish a story about how dangerous it is to leave kids in cars ... I have read about kids dying in cars because of the heat, but to witness it in my own neighborhood is disturbing, to say the least."

### Not illegal - yet

And soon it may be illegal in Michigan. State Rep. Mark Meadows, D-East Lansing, and Rep. Fran Amos, R-Waterford, will soon reintroduce a two-bill package that would, among other things, make it a misdemeanor to leave a kid under 6 alone in a car.

The bills were introduced in the previous legislative session, but didn't go anywhere.

The language of the current bill is not quite the outright prohibition some would like. It says:

"A person who is responsible for the care or welfare of a child shall not leave that child unattended in a vehicle for a period of time that poses an unreasonable risk of harm, or injury to the child ..."

If the violation results in serious physical harm, or death, the person who left the child in the car could be charged with a felony.

The "unreasonable" part, Meadows said, "gives the court an opportunity to evaluate the circumstances."

Michele Struttman is the founder and director of Kids in Cars, a safety-advocacy group based in Washington, Mo. Struttman was aware of the effort by Meadows and Amos. She said 11 states have laws against leaving young children unattended in cars.

"People should understand, she said, "that a car is not a playground, it's not a baby sitter and it's not a toy."

What do you think? Call John Schneider at 377-1175, send a fax to 377-1298 or e-mail [jschneid@lsj.com](mailto:jschneid@lsj.com).

Include your name, phone number, city, town or township.

---

Copyright 2007 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service (updated August 2006)

[\[Back\]](#)

This is a printer friendly version of an article from [livingstondaily.com](http://livingstondaily.com)  
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

---

Article published May 30, 2007

## Man charged for sex with local minor

By Lisa Roose-Church  
DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

A Livonia man was arraigned Monday on nine criminal counts for allegedly having sex with a 14-year-old Livingston County runaway, whom he met on MySpace.com a year earlier.

Aaron Christopher Wilkerson, 22, was charged with six counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and three counts of child sexually abusive activity after an investigation revealed he had met the 14-year-old and had sex with her, police said.

Judge Jeffrey Fanto of 34th District Court in Wayne County set Wilkerson's bond at \$500,000 cash or surety. If convicted, Wilkerson faces up to life in prison.

The investigation started when a member of the Detroit Police Project Safe Neighborhoods Task Force contacted a Livonia police detective who is assigned to the Michigan State Police Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force with information about a runaway girl staying at the Livonia address of an adult male she met on MySpace.com when she was 13 years old.

On Friday, Wilkerson was observed by the Project Safe surveillance team leaving his residence with the teen, police said. A Livonia police scout car stopped Wilkerson, and he was arrested without incident by officers from the Project Safe task force, Livonia Police Department and ICAC.

During subsequent investigation by the ICAC, it was learned that pictures and a short video that were "sexual in nature" had been uploaded to the Internet, police said.

Who was pictured in those photographs and video was not released.

Michigan's ICAC task force consists of members from the Lansing Community College Department of Public Safety, Livingston County Sheriff's Department, Livonia Police, Michigan State Police, Monroe County Sheriff's, New Baltimore Police and Troy Police departments, as well as special agents from the U.S. Secret Service.

The task force is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The U.S. Department of Justice currently funds 45 regional ICAC task forces across the U.S. composed of local, state and federal law enforcement officers.

Anyone with information about Internet crimes should call the nearest branch of the Michigan State Police (which in Livingston County is in Brighton at (810) 227-1051), or the ICAC hot line at (877) 5CYBER3 or (877) 529-2373.

Contact Daily Press & Argus reporter Lisa Roose-Church at (517) 552-2846 or at [lrchurch@gannett.com](mailto:lrchurch@gannett.com).

---

# County honors foster parents

Ironwood Daily Globe

Published Tuesday, May 29, 2007 3:59:50 PM Central Time

BESSEMER -- The Gogebic County Department of Human Services and Gogebic County Family Court co-sponsored a foster parent recognition banquet on Thursday, May 10, 2007, at the Black River Lodge, Bessemer. Foster parents who serve youth in Gogebic County were honored.

George Newman from the Michigan Indian Child Welfare Agency provided the key note address. His topic focused on the role foster parents play in rebuilding a foster child's life.

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to the foster parents in attendance.

The Gogebic County Department of Human Services presently has 16 licensed foster homes. Anyone interested in becoming a licensed foster care provider for children should contact the Department of Human Services, Bessemer, at 663-6200 and ask for Dennis Spaete, the foster home licensing worker.

DHS Matters!  
Michigan Department of Human Services

Lansing, Michigan

May 30, 2007

## **Foster parents needed in Michigan**

LANSING – About 50 people gathered during a cold, wet and blustery day May 17 to celebrate Foster Care Month in Michigan during the annual rally at the state Capitol. With 18,500 children in Michigan's foster care system, the need for stable, secure and loving foster and adoptive parents is great. Governor Jennifer M. Granholm declared May as Foster Care Month. To celebrate, an information fair and news conference was held at the Capitol steps and east lawn. The fair kicked off the state conference organized by the Michigan Association of Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Parents. Speakers at the Capitol event May 17 included DHS director Marianne Udow, Elizabeth Carey of Michigan Federation of Children and Families, foster parents and former foster children.

"Today we celebrate this month-long appreciation of foster parents and the immense gift they provide to children in Michigan," Carey said. "Every day they make a difference in a child's life. Every day they provide love and refuge for children in crisis. Every day they are heroes. I personally and on behalf of the Michigan Federation for Children and Families, thank each and every one."

Ironwood Daily Globe

Published Tuesday, May 29, 2007  
3:59:49 PM Central Time

To the editor:

As Foster Care Month comes to a close, I would like to honor the dedication of Wisconsin's foster families.

We value and admire the strong commitment that foster families have made to children in their communities. Opening our homes to children and families in need is an act of compassion and generosity that has a lifelong impact on children.

We begin by honoring the children who have been removed from their homes and placed in foster care. They face some of life's most challenging circumstances. We admire their ability to face these hurdles with courage. They are an inspiration to all of us.

We commend the case workers who are faced with the difficult decision to remove children from their homes, who work with families to try to make them whole again, who pick children up in the middle of the night, and who diligently find permanence for children who can't live with their birth families.

We recognize the court system -- the attorneys, advocates, volunteers, and judges -- who work within the bounds of the law to protect these children and

strive to make good, informed decisions for them.

On behalf of the Department of Health and Family Services, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank the foster families who are the foundation of a foster care program -- these individuals truly embrace the notion to "Live Deeper, Love Wider, and Leave Bigger."

Please join us in celebrating the service, compassion and dedication of the many people who make up the foster care program in Wisconsin.

To find out how you can become a foster parent, visit the department's Web site at [dhfs.wisconsin.gov](http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov) or contact the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center at (800) 947-8074.

**Kevin R. Hayden**

**Secretary, Wisconsin Department of  
Health and Family Services**



Published May 27, 2007

[ From Delta-Waverly Community News ]

## **Human Services seeks child care providers**

ST. JOHNS — Have you ever thought about becoming a licensed child care provider but didn't know how to get started? If you would like more information or have questions about becoming licensed, please call Tammy Heilman at the Office for Young Children at (517) 887-4538 or 800-234-6996. Clinton County is looking for child care providers who are interested in providing a warm and nurturing learning environment during daytime as well as evening and week end hours. "Try Caring for a Living", an information session about becoming a licensed provider, will be offered on Wednesday, June 13 at 1 p.m. at the department of Human Services, 201 W Railroad St., St Johns.

## **500 Want More For Early Ed**

MIRS, May 29, 2007

Lawmakers should spend more on early childhood education, supporters of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) claimed at their morning Capitol rally.

The so-called Star Power rally drew 500 advocates, including the group's Executive Director Judy **SAMELSON**, who told *MIRS* the state has a choice between spending on early schooling or prisons.

"We are not going to have an educated workforce. We are not going to be a family friendly state that businesses want to come and locate in." The alternative, she added, is to build the state around corrections, which she contends is the wrong message to send.

Since 2006 the coalition has funded 21 Great Start Collaboratives in partnership with 57 Intermediate School Districts with a combined total of \$3.9 million in public and private funding.

Michigan has 670,000 children under the age of five and nearly 20 percent enter school with "serious issues that impede their school readiness including health and behavioral learning problems," Samelson said.



## Teen will be tried for rape He's accused of robbing, raping girl at gunpoint near Loomis Park

Wednesday, May 30, 2007

By Steven Hepker

shepker@citpat.com -- 768-4923

A Jackson teen shook, sobbed and covered her eyes Tuesday as she described being robbed and raped at gunpoint Nov. 9 near Loomis Park.

Defense attorney Andrew Kirkpatrick spared the victim graphic details by agreeing with Assistant Prosecutor Allison Bates that the girl was raped and robbed.

"The issue is, my client is not the one," Kirkpatrick said of 16-year-old Karon V. Reynolds.

District Judge James Justin said that will be up to a jury. He bound Reynolds over to Circuit Court on charges of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and armed robbery -- potential life felonies.

The 17-year-old victim testified she was at the park that night with her boyfriend and two other teenage boys. They were sitting on a bench at 8:30 p.m. when a man approached.

"He said it was a stick-up, and he wanted my purse," she said.

The foursome was herded at gunpoint into a garage on nearby Edgewood Street, she said.

The gunman ordered the boys to remove their shoes, lie face down and place their shoes near their heads.

"He told me to take my clothes off," the girl testified. He held a handgun to her head while he raped her, she said. When he finished, he threatened to kill one of them.

"He was trying to make us decide which one of us would take a bullet," the girl said.

The victim identified Reynolds as the rapist in court. She had identified him days or weeks after the attack from a class picture in a school yearbook.

Kirkpatrick argued that the girl initially did not mention that she might have recognized her assailant as a former classmate. He also said it was too dark that night to make a positive identification, and that Reynolds is over 6-foot-2 -- at least 4 inches taller than the girl described the rapist.

Reynolds remains in the Jackson County Youth Home pending trial.

©2007 Jackson Citizen Patriot

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



## Bay City Times Live

**Sunday, May 27, 2007**

### **Sheriff's deputy shot responding to domestic dispute**

A Bay County Sheriff's deputy was shot early Sunday morning responding to the scene of a domestic dispute at the end of Cody-Estey Road in Pinconning, according to Sheriff John Miller. The gunman later shot and killed himself, the sheriff reported.

The names of those involved are not being released pending notification of family members.

The incident began when deputies were called to the Pinconning area for a domestic dispute call. Miller says the suspect fled the scene on his motorcycle, which was then discovered in a small parking area at the end of Cody-Estey Road at Saginaw Bay.

Miller says when deputies arrived at the scene, two deputies and two troopers from the Michigan State Police at the Bay City post were already on the scene looking for the suspect.

"The suspect fired on the officers, striking one of the deputies," Miller said. "He has minor injuries."

The deputy was taken to Bay Regional Medical Center. A spokesman for the hospital says the deputy was treated and released.

Emergency Services from the Michigan State Police flew over the area with a helicopter and used infrared imaging to try to find the suspect. No one was located.

Officers then entered the area and found the suspect's body with a weapon next to him, Miller stated. The body was found several feet from where the officer was shot.

Staff from the Bay Area Women's Center tended to the victim of the initial domestic violence incident.

Copyright 2005 MLive.com. All Rights Reserved.

# Stealing from elderly woman gets probation

Wednesday, May 30, 2007

By Lynn Turner

lturner@kalamazoogazette.com 388-8564

Stacey Marie Banks knew that the woman for whom she held power of attorney didn't have all of her mental faculties and ``preyed upon" her to get several tens of thousands of dollars, as did Banks' mother-in-law, Kalamazoo County Circuit Judge Gary C. Giguere Jr. said Tuesday during Banks' sentencing.

Banks, 30, of Benton Avenue, was sentenced by Giguere to one day in jail, five years of probation and payment of \$177,841 in victim restitution and was ordered to have no contact with anyone older than 65 who is not a family member without the permission of her probation agent for embezzlement from a vulnerable adult from June to December 2003 in Portage.

Giguere called Banks' actions ``disturbing."

``The elderly and the frail are among the weakest of society," he said. Banks' job, as power of attorney for Mildred Riedell-Guimond, was to protect her. Riedell-Guimond died in 2004 at age 86.

Banks' mother-in-law, Alberta Banks, who was Riedell-Guimond's caregiver, was sentenced April 30 on an identical charge.

Kristen Getting, Stacey Banks' attorney, said her client's actions were ``an aberration in her behavior.

``She did care about Millie," Getting said. It was just ``too hard" to resist the money she had access to from Riedell-Guimond's credit-union account.

Stacey Banks declined to comment.

Getting said Stacey Banks plans to pay back the money to Riedell-Guimond's heirs. The judge ordered a hearing in 90 days to monitor her restitution progress.



## Muskegon Chronicle

### Government comes to aid of asparagus growers

Wednesday, May 30, 2007

**By Federico Martinez**

**[fmartinez@muskegonchronicle.com](mailto:fmartinez@muskegonchronicle.com)**

Struggling farmers in West Michigan will receive a "shot in the arm" from the federal government's decision to buy 3 million pounds of asparagus this spring.

The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture has announced that it will distribute the asparagus in federal food assistance programs throughout the country. The government will buy asparagus from farmers across the nation, but West Michigan is one of the largest providers of the vegetable.

"It's very good news," said John Bakker, executive director of the Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board. "This is a huge shot in the arm for us."

West Michigan asparagus growers have been struggling this spring because they say there is a shortage of migrant farm workers. Farmers in Oceana County say they have had to destroy thousands of acres of asparagus because of the labor shortage.

Asparagus season in West Michigan usually begins in early May, and in good years stretches through the end of June.

The federal government has been buying surplus asparagus from growers for the past five years, but this is the largest quantity it has pledged to buy, Bakker said.

"The 2007 purchase will help stabilize prices in the industry and provide a popular commodity in USDA nutritional programs," U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Holland, said in a press release.

Hoekstra noted that Michigan asparagus growers "continue to operate at an economic disadvantage" because of the federal government's Andean Trade Preference Act, which has encouraged a flood of imported asparagus from Peru.

Farmers will still have to contend with the labor shortage, Bakker said. But it will allow many farmers, who have had to mow their earlier harvests, to still break even or make a small profit this year, he said.

©2007 Muskegon Chronicle

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

# MORNING SUN

## Jobless rates take seasonal dip

By IAN PATRICK GRAY  
Sun Staff Writer

Warmer weather and clear skies forced jobless rates in Clare, Gratiot and Isabella Counties down for the first time in months.

It's too soon to start celebrating a turnaround in the overall economy, however, according to Mark Reffitt, regional economic analyst for the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives.

"This is just a seasonal issue," Reffitt said. "There's nothing here that I wouldn't expect to see."

Overall, rates in the state fell from a March 2007 figure of 7.2 percent unemployment to an April 2007 figure of 6.8 percent. Rates remain higher than last year by about 0.2 percent.

Nationwide, unemployment in the same period fell from 4.5 percent to 4.3 percent. Rates in April 2006 were 4.5 percent.

"Obviously in April, we see a pickup in construction and tourism-related industries," Reffitt said. "This is not out of the ordinary."

In Clare County, jobless rates dipped from 11.4 percent in March to 10.9 percent in April. That's a full one percent above the April 2006 rate of 9.9 percent.

Gratiot County showed similar movement with unemployment rates dropping from 9.4 percent to 8.5 percent. One year ago, Gratiot rates were at 8.1 percent.

Isabella County showed the smallest decrease in jobless rates, oozing down from 5.6 percent to 5.2 percent. In April 2006, rates in the county were 4.9 percent.

Even a 1 percent shift in jobless rates, however, is no cause for joy or concern, Reffitt said.

"These are very small counties we are talking about," Reffitt said. "Percentages are distorted with small numbers of people. So the movement of one percent is not that significant."

The one month changes in jobless rates in the three counties combined, equal only an extra 350 jobs, with 250 of those in Isabella County. In Clare County and Gratiot County, the swing of one percent in jobless rates equates to about 135 and 205 jobs respectively.

In comparison, statewide, one percent of the labor force is equal to roughly 50,000 jobs.

Construction and tourism typically pick up momentum in April, especially when the weather is nice as it has been, Reffitt said.

"We're still just treading water," he said. "If we continue to see this slight upward edging of jobless rates in June and July, then maybe we could start to say this is an employment hike. But until we see more data, we can't make that conclusion."

Click here to return to story:

[http://www.themorningsun.com/stories/053007/loc\\_jobless.shtml](http://www.themorningsun.com/stories/053007/loc_jobless.shtml)



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published May 30, 2007

## State still unable to rule out layoffs

Government shutdown remains on table amid budget shortfall

Chris Andrews  
Lansing State Journal

### Related news from the Web

Latest headlines by topic:

- [Employment / Labor Law](#)
- [Law](#)

Powered by [Topix.net](#)

Gov. Jennifer Granholm still can't rule out temporary layoffs of state workers or a partial government shutdown, a spokeswoman said Tuesday.

"We are making progress on resolving the budget crisis, but we haven't finalized how it will all be resolved," spokeswoman Liz Boyd said. "So no final decisions have been made regarding a government shutdown or any word on whether there will be temporary layoffs."

Granholm and legislative leaders reached agreement Friday on a plan for resolving most of an \$800 million shortfall in this fiscal year's budget.

But there are still \$200 million in cuts to be figured out, and the state faces serious budget problems in 2008.

Earlier this month, the Gran-holm administration officially notified unions representing state government workers of possible layoffs beginning as early as June 22.

There is talk of closing many state offices for a few days around holidays.

Byron Christopher Williams, a Department of Labor and Economic Growth employee, is frustrated with lawmakers and bothered by the prospects of losing pay.

"I think the whole process has been ridiculous," said Williams, a Lansing resident who has worked for the state for 13 years. "They've been fiddling while Rome is burning."

Williams said he'd like to see lawmakers raise taxes to get the state back to a sound financial footing.

"If you want your streetlights to come on at night, if you want your potholes fixed, if you want the police to come when you call, that's all taken care of with taxes," he said.

Alan Kilar, spokesman for United Auto Workers Local 6000, said he was sorry to hear that layoffs are still on the table.

"In reality, they don't save that much out of the general fund, where the budget deficit is, because a lot of those positions are federally funded," he said.



"For example, a lot of the social workers are 80 percent federally funded, so if you lay somebody off, you only save 20 percent," he said.

The budget actions agreed to on Friday do save the jobs of 29 state troopers.

The troopers received pink slips earlier this year, but they were rescinded after the Michigan State Police Troopers Association donated \$400,000 to the state.

On Friday, the Legislature approved \$1.2 million to pay for the troopers for the rest of the year.

Contact Chris Andrews at 377-1054 or [candrews@lsj.com](mailto:candrews@lsj.com).

---

Copyright 2007 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service (updated August 2006)

[\[Back\]](#)

# It's time to contact legislators

FLINT JOURNAL LETTER TO THE EDITOR

GRAND BLANC

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Tuesday, May 29, 2007

By Katie L. Mysen  
Journal Reader

The state budget cuts that were proposed are detrimental to our health and safety. The cuts do not work to balance the budget. The only way to get Michigan out of this financial crisis is to increase revenue.

If the legislators cannot come up with a way to increase revenue, many programs that are imperative to the health and safety of Michigan's children and families will lose funding.

Cuts that had been slated for **Medicaid** would affect the health care of millions of residents, including thousands of children. Community mental health programs would be cut, too. Cuts to the Department of Corrections would lead to less safety in our communities.

**Cuts to the Department of Human Services would mean a reduction in such efforts as the Family Independence Program, which helps families and children obtain such basic needs as food and shelter.** Furthermore, a reduction in the per-pupil funding for schools, which also was planned, will affect the education of our children.

We, as voters, can stop this from happening. We, as parents, grandparents and adults, have a responsibility to stand up for our children. We need to contact our legislators. These are elected officials and they will listen if they want to continue to be elected.

Please, write a letter or an e-mail, make a phone call or make an appointment to meet them in person. A list of representatives and senators can be found at [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov).

Katie L. Mysen

Grand Blanc